

THE    NEED    OF    SERVICES  
FOR  
MENTALLY    RETARDED    CHILDREN

(A Survey in Hennepin County)

Prepared by

Family and Child Welfare Division

Community Welfare Council

July 1953

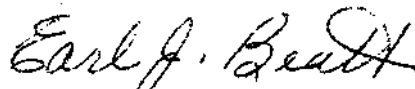
Minneapolis, Minnesota

## FOREWORD

This report was prepared at the suggestion of a group of interested parents, citizens, and professional people who are particularly concerned over the lack of resources for the mentally retarded child in Minneapolis and Hennepin County. It was the consensus of this group that some documentation of need, as seen by the parents of mentally retarded children, should be undertaken.

The report was prepared by the Director of the Family and Child Welfare Division of the Community Welfare Council in consultation with the Research Director of the Council. Acknowledgment is given to the helpful assistance of Mr. John Holahan, President of the Association of Friends of the Mentally Retarded; Miss Mildred Thomson, head of the Bureau for Mentally Deficient and Epileptic, Division of Social Welfare; Manford Hall, Hennepin County Welfare Board. A special note of thanks is given to Mr. & Mrs. Everett Taylor for mimeographing and mailing of schedules,

While caution has been used to prepare this data as correctly and accurately as possible, and without bias, errors may have occurred. If such is the case, the author wishes to seek the indulgence of the reader in errors of fact or errors of inference.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Earl J. Beatt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Earl J. Beatt

# THE NEED OF SERVICES FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

(A SURVEY IN HENNEPIN COUNTY)

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background:

In January, 1953, representatives from the Association of Friends of the Mentally Retarded and the Hennepin County Welfare Board met with members of the staff of the Community Welfare Council to discuss community planning for the mentally retarded in Hennepin County. The discussion centered itself around long-term planning for mentally retarded, most specifically, children who are mentally retarded. The representatives from Hennepin County Welfare Board and the Association of Friends of the Mentally Retarded brought to the Council's attention something of the problems which confront the mentally retarded and the parents of mentally retarded. In addition, they gave material indicating the interests of various groups around the problems in this area.

As a result of this meeting, the groups and individuals particularly interested in this problem area (social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and parents) were invited to participate in a conference to discuss community planning for the mentally retarded in Hennepin County. The first meeting of this conference group was held on February 13, 1953.

Two exploratory meetings on community planning for the mentally retarded were held by this conference group. It appeared in the interest of the group that they were particularly hopeful that the Community Welfare Council might offer itself as a coordinating body to study the problem area involved. Such questions in the exploratory meeting were raised;

What do the mentally retarded need?

Are the needs attainable?

How best should they be met?

As a result of these exploratory meetings, it was suggested that the Community Welfare Council, through its staff, bring together as much information as possible from parents of mentally retarded children and organizations aware of the problems of the mentally retarded in the community. With this body of information another meeting of the conference group should then be called to discuss possible formation of a steering committee to undertake a method of determining how the needs indicated might be met.

## B. Purpose of Study:

With the charge from the conference group to draw together information regarding the need for services to mentally retarded children, the staff of the Family & Child Welfare Division of the Community Welfare Council held several meetings with representatives from the Association of Friends of the Mentally Retarded and members of staffs of agencies offering services to mentally retarded. It was the consensus of opinion that a questionnaire be developed to determine the need for services to mentally retarded children in Hennepin County. Thus, the purpose of this study.

## II. PROCEDURE

With the acceptance of the charge to determine the needs for services to mentally retarded children, the staff of the Family & Child Welfare Division, Community Welfare Council, after meetings with representatives of the Association of Friends of the Mentally Retarded, P. T. A. group of Fraser School, representatives from Hennepin County Welfare Board, drew up a study schedule to be submitted to parents of mentally retarded children. It was felt the best sources for gaining direct information as to the needs for specific services were the parents themselves. The Association of Friends of the Mentally Retarded and the representative from Hennepin County Welfare Board agreed to offer the services of their organizations in sending schedules to members of the Association and to clients of Hennepin County Welfare Board with cover letters explaining the purpose for the study, and assuring the parents the respect of the confidentiality of the material derived from the study. (See cover letters and study schedule, Attachments I, II and III.)

After submission of the survey schedule to the parents of mentally retarded children, the material derived from the schedules was compiled by the staff of the Family & Child Welfare Division.

491 schedules were mailed, 338 to interested persons and members of the Association of Friends of the Mentally Retarded, and 153 to clients of Hennepin County Welfare Board. Ten schedules were returned by the Post Office as a result of mail difficulties (wrong address, no longer at address, etc.); 195 schedules were filled in and returned for a 40.5% return.

Using the more commonly quoted figure, "1%", as the percentage of mentally retarded people in the general population,\* we have roughly estimated the returned schedules represent 10% of the mentally retarded children in Minneapolis. Defining, by age, a mentally retarded child as 24 or under, the 1950 U. S. Census of Population, Minneapolis, Minnesota, estimates for Minneapolis 191,225 persons, 24 years of age and under. This would suggest 1,912 mentally retarded\* Thus, 195 schedules represent 1 out of every 10 mentally retarded children in Minneapolis,

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\* A Study of the Institutional Needs for the Mentally Retarded in the State of Minnesota, 1952. - John Holahan

### III. FINDINGS

#### Mental Level of Child:

In an effort to offer sound planning in the area of services for mentally retarded children, it was deemed necessary to have an estimate of the child's level of retardation. Any planning points to the need for clarification as to the specific purpose a program will serve and the specific group whose needs it proposes to meet. It was recognized that professional diagnostic material was not available. Therefore, the parents of each child were asked to evaluate their child as either mildly, moderately, or severely retarded.

- 35 (17.9%) considered their child to be mildly retarded}
- 78 (40%) estimated their child to be moderately retarded;
- 58 (29.7%) indicated they felt their child to be severely retarded;
- 24 (12.3%) did not reply to this question.

A breakdown of the general mentally retarded population into three categories (idiots, imbeciles, morons) done in England in 1924\* and in the United States in 1945 show an analysis of the percentage breakdown by classification of mentally retarded,

	<u>English Study</u>	<u>United States Study</u>
Idiots (IQ generally under 25)	5%	10%
Imbeciles (IQ generally under 50)	20%	40%
Morons (IQ generally under 70)	75%	50%

A comparison of these figures with the parents' estimates of their children in this survey suggests:

- (1) Parents willing to identify themselves with an organization developed to aid the mentally retarded (i.e., Association of Friends of the Mentally Retarded) and parents whose children are under state guardianship (Hennepin County Welfare Board clients) may have more severely retarded children than parents not so identified. Parents with a child only mildly retarded may feel less need to join such an association, to place their child under guardianship, in an institution, or to participate in such a study, - feeling the resources currently available are sufficient, or that their child is much more apt to be self-sufficient.
- (2) The possibility that parents of mentally retarded children tend to magnify the severity of retardation of their own child.

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\* A Study of the Institutional Needs for the Mentally Retarded in the State of Minnesota, 1952. - John Holahan

School Status;

21 of the 195 are under 5, thus 174 are considered in the school age population.

53 (30.4%) of 174 mentally retarded school age children (5 and over) are known to be in schools.

16 (9.2%) are in special classes - public school.

3 (1.7%) out of 33 in state institutions are in school.\*

34 (19.5%) are in private schools.

112 (64.4%) are reported to be out of school.

9 (5.2%) did not reply to the question.

It would appear from the above figures that there is an unusually small number of children in this particular group making use of special classes in the public schools. However, if we recall that the group of parents answering the schedules indicate that by and large their children are more severely retarded than the general mentally retarded population, it is easier to understand. During the academic school year, 1952-1953, the Minneapolis Board of Education reported 56 classes, including 990 slow-learning children. The large bulk of children were in the mental range of IQ 50 through 80. However, one special class of nine children was offered to children with a mental level between IQ 40 to 50. It is the understanding of the author that legislative authority to delete IQ 50 as the lower limit for admission of students has been given and that Minneapolis Board of Education can authorize special classes for children under IQ 50. It is further the understanding of the author that the major problem in this area is the procurement of teachers skilled in offering training to this group of children.

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\* Estimated by Mildred Thomson, head of Bureau for Mentally Deficient and Epileptic, Minnesota Division of Social Welfare.

Nevertheless, the large number of children reported in this summary to be out of school (112) would seem to be due to the lack of public school resources limited by an insufficient number of special classes for children with a mental deficiency generally between IQ 40 - 80. This may be due to the fact that as yet the general public has not had sufficient understanding of the philosophy of training or education for the mentally retarded (in the sense of enabling the child to adjust to his environment and to develop to his greatest potential) to create the atmosphere for the development of more special classes. In spite of some 56 classes for mentally retarded children in Minneapolis, there are today waiting lists for children who might be aided by special classes.

Some children undoubtedly also have remained out of school because the parents, unable to place their children in public schools, also lack the financial assets to use private resources. If we use the English study and the United States study referred to earlier in this report and exclude the categories, "idiot" and "imbecile", i.e., those retarded children under IQ 50, the English study would still indicate at least 75% of the retarded children would be potentially eligible for school in view of the present Board of Education consideration given to children with IQ 40 through 80, and the United States study would indicate at least 50% of the retarded children would be potentially eligible for school. Of the parents reporting in this schedule, 17.9% consider their children to be mildly retarded, thus possibly eligible for school. (Again, emphasis should be given to the fact that this group represents the more severely retarded children.) It would appear, therefore, from the number enrolled in public schooling (10.9%) that one of the areas of need for the mentally retarded child is the support of the general public in recognizing the need of public education or training for these children.

A review of a somewhat comparable normal population would seem in order to make further observations. It is estimated that there are 79,041 children between the ages of 5 and 17 in Minneapolis.\* (The Minneapolis school figures estimate a total of 78,688 children in Minneapolis between the ages of 5 and 17. For the purposes of analysis we will use the figures 79,041.) The breakdown of this population is as follows:

In school - (93.8%) .....	74,115
Public school - (76%) .....	60,051
Private and parochial school - (18%) .....	14,064
Non-attending - (4.6%) .....	3,647
(2/3 of this group are 17 years old)	
Temporarily out of city - (1.2%) .....	926
Unaccounted for - (.4%) .....	353
(The difference in school figure of 78,688 and Bureau of Census report of 79,041)	

If we compare the normal school age population with the mentally retarded school age population represented in this survey, we are able to see something of the discrepancy in public school services offered the mentally retarded child.

(It should be noted that the mentally retarded children considered in this schedule include those from 5 through 24 years of age while the normal school population includes children from 5 through 17 years of age so the comparisons cannot be taken at complete face value.)

	<u>Mentally Retarded Children</u>	<u>Normal Children</u>
In school	30.4%	93.8
Total public	10.9%	76%
Public school	9.2%	
School in institutions	1.7%	
Private & parochial school	19.5%	18%
Non-attendance	64.4%	4.6%
No reply to schedule	5.2%	
Out of city		1.2%
Unaccounted for		.4%
	100 %	100 %

\* 1950 U. S. Census of Population, Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States  
Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census



The striking difference between 10.9% of the mentally retarded school age children using public school facilities, as against 76% of the normal school age children suggests an area of need that should have continuing attention, This report does not mean to imply that public educators are remiss in not recognizing the need for training the mentally retarded child, as the current thinking around the training potential in the mentally retarded child is certainly a controversial issue among trained educators, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists today. But the report does hope to impress upon the reader the need of close attention in this area to determine the proper role of education in aiding the mentally retarded child.

#### Whereabouts of Child:

143 of the 195 children reported are living in their own homes; the remaining 52 are away from home in institutions, with relatives, or in other facilities.

#### Program:

The body of the survey centers itself around the parents' view of needed services, programs and facilities for the mentally retarded child. In drawing up the schedule the following suggested items were listed:

- Pre-school nursery
- Day care center
- Temporary boarding care for vacation or emergency
- Summer camp
- Sheltered workshop
- Once-a-week church school
- Trained sitter service
- Parent education courses
- Leisure-time activity
- Home training program for parents and children
- Other

The schedule was divided into two groups - parents with children at home and parents whose children are away. Each were asked to answer the questions regarding their opinion of needed program separately. In this manner we obtained the total opinion of the parents but at the same time were able to determine from the parents with children at home, how many potentially might use each service.

**TABLE I. Service Programs Parents of Mentally Retarded Children Consider Are Needed in the Community.**

SERVICES	Total No.	Total Rank Order	Parents With Child At Home	Rank Order	Parents With Child Away From Home	Rank Order
Sheltered Workshop	105	1	88	1	17	3
Day Care Center	65	2	41	2	24	1
Temporary Boarding Care	61	3	39	3	22	2
Leisure-time Activity	43	4	31	4	12	5
Pre-school Nursery	38	5	22	7	16	4
Home Training Program	37	6	25	6	12	5
Summer Camp	35	7	28	5	7	9
Parent Education	25	8	15	9	10	7
Church School	25	9	18	8	7	9
Trained Sitter Service	19	10	9	10	10	7
Other	4	11	3	11	1	11

The above table indicates that the majority of parents (105) favor a sheltered workshop. This figure is affected, however, by the large number of children under guardianship, served by Hennepin County Welfare Board who are listed as needing a sheltered workshop. Fifty of the 53 schedules from the Hennepin County Welfare Board group are listed as desirous of a workshop. It should be noted here that schedules from this group were prepared by the social workers serving each child. Therefore, the view expressed by them may or may not be the same expressed by the parents.

The three services given greatest consideration for need are, in order, sheltered workshop, day care center, and temporary boarding care for emergencies or vacation. The other services which appear to be significantly important to the parents are, in order: leisure-time activities, pre-school nursery, home training for parent and child, and summer camping.

The parents were asked to list in order of preference the services they felt necessary. However, many only checked the service without indicating any preferential order. For those services appearing to be significant, the following table offers the first, second, and third choice for needed services by the parents who indicated a preference and whose child is at home.

**TABLE 2. Parents' Preferential Choice of Service for Mentally Retarded Children in Their Own Homes.**

SERVICE	CHOICE	TOTAL	AGE GROUP				NO REPORT
			0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 12	13 - 20	
Sheltered Workshop	1	7	1	1	1	3	
	2	8	1		6	1	
	3	3			2	1	
Day Care Center	1	11	1	2	7	1	
	2	8	1	3	2	1	1
	3	0					
Temporary Boarding Care	1	9	1	3	2	2	1
	2	7	1	1	4	1	
	3	4		2	2		
Leisure-time Activity	1	2			2		
	2	4			1	2	1
	3	1			1		
Pre-school Nursery	1	4			4		
	2	3		2	1		
	3	4	1	2			1
Home Training Program	1	5	1	1	3		
	2	2		1	1		
	3	2			1		1
Summer Camp	1	3			2	1	
	2	2	1		1		
	3	5			5		

To enable a planning group in the decision of determining program on the basis of need, it was felt advisable to analyze the services considered significant in terms of the assumed mental level and age grouping of children in their own homes who would be the potential users of any programs developed. Table 3, therefore, offers a basic group potential for any planning body to consider in program development.

**TABLE 3. Parents' Appraisal of Community Need for Mentally Retarded Children and Number of Children in Own Home by Assumed Mental Level and Age Grouping.**

SERVICES	TOTAL	M E N T A L   L E V E L				A G E   G R O U P						NO REPORT
		HIGH GRADE	MIDDLE	LOW	NO REPORT	0-2	3-5	6-12	13-20	21+		
Sheltered Workshop	88	20	39	21	8	2*	1*	19*	23	41	2	
Day Care Center	41	6	15	16	4	5*	9	19	5	1**	2	
Temporary Bdg. Care	39	3	16	20	0	3	10	18	6	0	2	
Leisure-time Activity	31	8	18	3	2	0	0	10	11	7	3	
Pre-school Nursery	22	3	7	9	3	2	7	11	0	1**	1	
Home Training Program	25	4	9	12	0	4	7	12	1	0	1	
Summer Camp	28	4	13	5	6	1*	0	20	6	1	0	

\* Not considered a potential user for this service at this time due to age.

\*\* Not a potential user.

It must be remembered that the figures above represent the children of the parents answering the schedule. In some instances the opinion of a parent regarding the community need for a particular service does not coincide with particular need of his own child, i. e., one parent with a mentally retarded child over 21 sees pre-school nursery as a needed community service. Thus a planning body must see these figures in the light of accepted current philosophy of careful selection of the child for a program based on a consideration of mental level (and incidentally emotional level) along with the age factor. For example, in evaluating a workshop program thought must be given, in light of present knowledge, as to whether this would be geared to rehabilitation of mentally retarded children in the upper levels of retardation, in an age grouping possibly 16 or 18 to 23; or should a planning group give higher priority in planning a workshop to socialization, offering a period of time during each day to mentally retarded, probably in the age range of 13 and over, and in the intellectual range of 35 to 50 (often the older mongoloid and brain injured person) to make some use of his time, the result of which would not necessarily be production but socialization.

## Parent Participations

Parents were asked, if the above facilities were provided in which their child participated, or in which they had an interest in helping, -

- (a) Could they devote time to a program on a volunteer or cooperative basis?
- (b) Drive in a car pool?
- (c) Pay something toward the expense of the service?

74 (37.9%) indicate they would be available for some volunteer help.

25 (12.8%) could drive in a car pool.

88 (45.1%) expressed willingness to pay something for the service.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

### 1. Mental Level of Child;

Parents answering the schedule for the most part have children with a greater degree of retardation, or assume their child to have, than previous studies on the degrees of retardation in the general population.

### 2. School Status:

While somewhat less than one-third (30.4%) of the mentally retarded children identified in this schedule are in school, 93.8% of the normal school age children are in school. It would seem that private facilities are proportionately as available for mentally retarded children as they are for the normal child. However, there appears to be a great disparity of public facilities available for mentally retarded children as compared to the normal child.

### 3. Program:

Those facilities considered in greatest need fall into two classifications, highest priority being given in the order named to: sheltered workshop, day care center, temporary boarding care. The second group considered important include, respectively, leisure-time activity, pre-school nursery, home training, and summer camp.

There appears to be a large enough basic group potential to suggest the planning body might give immediate consideration to the development of programs for the highest priority grouping, i. e., sheltered workshop, day care center, temporary boarding care.

# Community Welfare

## Council OF HENNEPIN COUNTY

404 SOUTH 8th ST • MINNEAPOLIS 4, MINNESOTA • TELEPHONE MAIN 5275

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A Division of  
The Community Chest and  
Council of Hennepin  
County, Inc.

During the past several months an interested group of citizens has been discussing the need for services to mentally retarded children. This group, which includes parents of mentally retarded children, doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, educators and psychologists, has been meeting under the auspices of the Hennepin County Community Chest and Council.

As a result of the meetings, a study to determine what needs for mentally retarded children seem most important is being conducted. If this can be determined, then it is planned that the committee set about seeing how the needs can be supplied.

The Association for the Friends of the Mentally Retarded have endorsed this project, and have allowed the committee to use their mailing list in sending out the enclosed questionnaire. It will be appreciated if you would be willing to answer the questions fully and honestly as possible to make the study effective.

It is hoped your answers can stimulate development of services to mentally retarded children.

Sincerely,

Services to Mentally Retarded  
Children Committee

Earl J. Beatt, Director  
Family and Child Welfare Division

HENNEPIN COUNTY WELFARE BOARD

Minneapolis 15, Minnesota

134 Court House

May 11, 1953

During the past several months an interested group of citizens has been discussing the need for services to mentally retarded children. This group, which includes parents of mentally retarded children, doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, educators, and psychologists, has been meeting under the auspices of the Hennepin County Community Chest and Council.

As a result of the meetings, a study to determine what needs for mentally retarded children seem most important is being conducted. If this can be determined, then it is planned that the committee set about seeing how the needs can be supplied.

The Hennepin County Welfare Board feels this is a worth-while project which may be helpful in setting up a needed service for your child. Respecting the confidentiality of the parents who come to us for service, we are mailing the schedule to you from our office. If you should wish to aid in this survey, however, would you fill out the schedule and return it to the address listed thereupon.

It is hoped your answers can stimulate development of services to mentally retarded children.

Sincerely,

Worker  
Child Service Division

To: Parents of Mentally Retarded Children

The Family & Child Welfare Division of the Hennepin County Community Chest & Council is conducting a study to determine the need for services to mentally retarded children. The best source for gaining direct information as to the needs for specific services are the parents themselves.

A committee planning services for the mentally retarded is interested in ascertaining the greatest and most pressing needs in this area.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Chronological age of child \_\_\_\_\_

What is your estimate of the mental level of child?

High grade (mildly retarded) \_\_\_\_\_  
Middle grade (moderately retarded) \_\_\_\_\_  
Low grade (severely retarded) \_\_\_\_\_

Is your child in school? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, type and name of school:

( ) Regular public school - special class \_\_\_\_\_

( ) State institution \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Private school \_\_\_\_\_

Is your child living at home? \_\_\_\_\_

Listed below are a number of services which could be considered as possible programs for mentally retarded children: (Answer the column applicable to your situation)

If child is at home:

Number in order of your preference the facility or facilities you could use now or in the next few years.

\_\_\_\_\_ Preschool nursery  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5 mornings a week  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3 mornings a week  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 morning a week

\_\_\_\_\_ Day care center  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5 days a week (all day care)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3 days a week  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 day a week

\_\_\_\_\_ Temporary boarding care for vacation or emergency

If child is away:

From your family experience, what facilities do you feel are most needed in the community? (Number in order of preferences)

\_\_\_\_\_ Preschool nursery

\_\_\_\_\_ Day care center

\_\_\_\_\_ Temporary boarding care for vacation or emergency



If child is at home: (continued)

\_\_\_\_\_ Summer camp  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sheltered workshop  
\_\_\_\_\_ Once-a-week church school  
\_\_\_\_\_ Trained sitter service  
\_\_\_\_\_ Parent education courses  
\_\_\_\_\_ Leisure-time activity center  
recreation, party, etc.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Home training program for  
parents and children  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other

If child is away: (continued)

\_\_\_\_\_ Summer camp  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sheltered workshop  
\_\_\_\_\_ Once-a-week church school  
\_\_\_\_\_ Trained sitter service  
\_\_\_\_\_ Parent education courses  
\_\_\_\_\_ Leisure-time activity center  
recreation, party, etc.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Home training program for  
parents and children  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other

If any of the above facilities are provided in which your child participates, or you have an interest in helping:

(A) Could you devote time to a program on a cooperative basis? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(B) Drive in a car pool? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(C) Pay something toward the expense of the service? \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN TO: Director, Family and Child Welfare Division  
Hennepin County Community Chest and Council  
Room 300, Citizens Aid Building  
404 South 8th Street  
Minneapolis 4, Minnesota